



BOLD NEW LOOK

Famous

APRIL 2008 » VOLUME 9 » NUMBER 4

**SPEED
RACER'S**
CHRISTINA
RICCI

The indie darling
makes an impact in
her first summer
blockbuster

**HAROLD
& KUMAR**
ARE HIGH ON THEIR
SEQUEL

**HELEN
HUNT**
RETURNS A
DIRECTOR

100th
ISSUE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40708019

SNAPS: SCARLETT JOHANSSON, KEVIN SPACEY, EDWARD NORTON, HAYDEN CHRISTENSEN

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IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS DARKNESS.

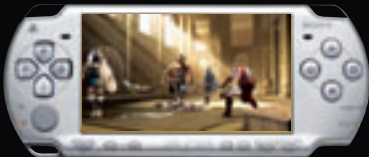
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Nudity

Sexual Content

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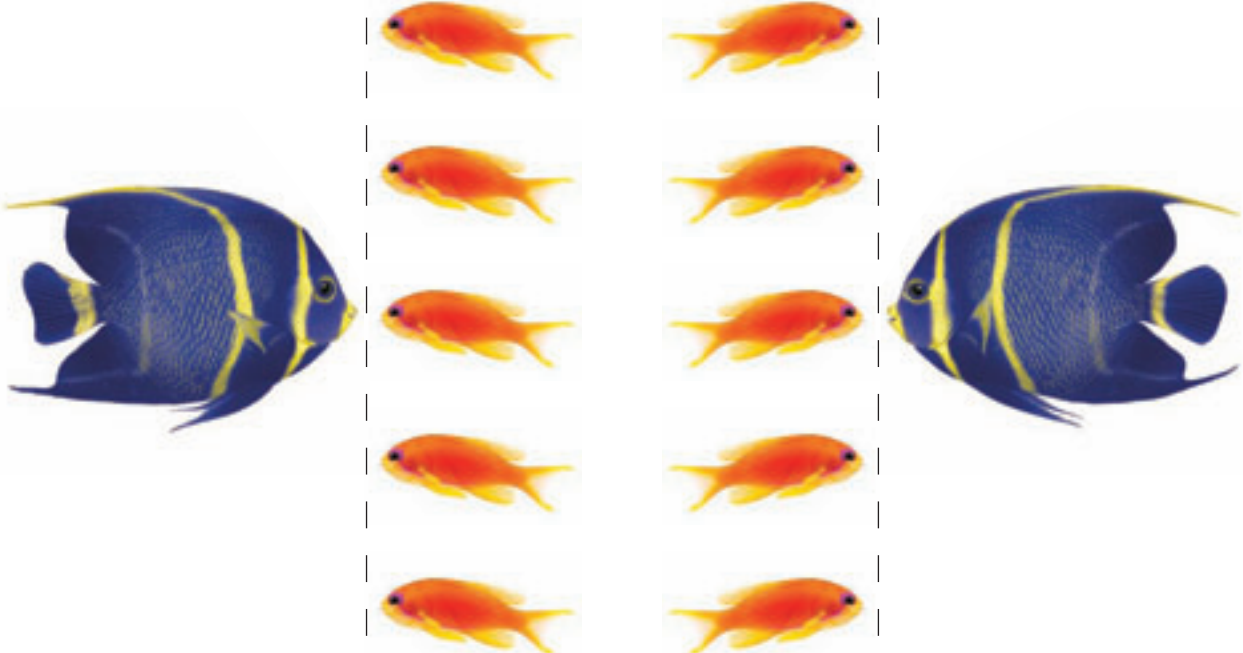
IN THE BEGINNING, THE RULES WERE SIMPLE.
THERE WEREN'T ANY.

GEORGE CLOONEY RENÉE ZELLWEGER JOHN KRASINSKI

LEATHERHEADS

UNIVERSAL PICTURES PRESENTS A SMOKEHOUSE PICTURES/CASEY SILVER PRODUCTION GEORGE CLOONEY RENÉE ZELLWEGER "LEATHERHEADS" JOHN KRASINSKI JONATHAN PRYCE
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This is the 100th issue of *Famous*, and although it's not nice to brag, we're proud of our magazine and hitting the big 100. We invite you to peruse all of our 100 covers, and take our **100th Issue Quiz**
• *By Marni Weisz*

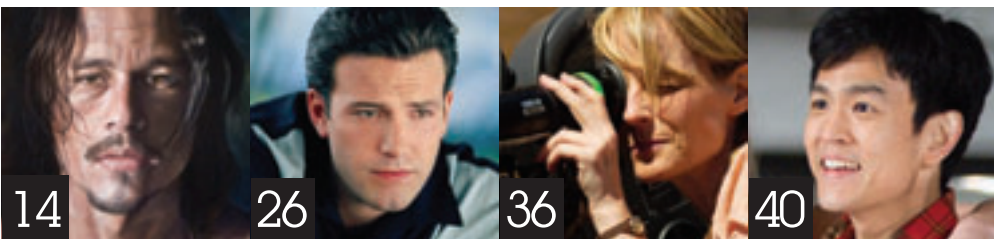
FINDING HELEN HUNT → 36
Oscar-winner **Helen Hunt** returns to the spotlight as not only the star of the dramedy *Then She Found Me*, but also its writer/director. Here she talks about spending a decade preparing the project, and why she just had to have Bette Midler play her mom
• *By Ingrid Randoja*

PRISON BREAK → 40
John Cho and **Kal Penn** talk about politics, street cred and reprising their roles as groundbreaking stoners in the comedy sequel *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*
• *By Bob Strauss*

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CHRISTINA RICCI SHIFTS GEARS → She's the child star who morphed into an edgy adolescent actor and now an indie movie mainstay. But **Christina Ricci** doesn't believe in limiting herself, as she proved by throwing herself into the fast-paced, summer popcorn pic *Speed Racer*. And you know what? Little Miss Indie had a blast making it • *By Bill Goodykoontz*



14

26

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40

COVER PHOTO BY JUSTIN STEPHENS/CORBIS OUTLINE



The world knew Andrea Manlangit for the beauty of her smile, which she brushed thrice daily. Then, one morning in the middle of her 36th year, Andrea looked down at the running tap as she brushed.

She then considered all the water that ran for nothing during those 36 years, torrents of it. Andrea Manlangit then turned off the tap and smiled a faint smile, which she continued to brush.

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LOOKING GREAT AT 100

I've been searching for a word that means to look backward and forward at the same time. Some culture, religion or language should have a phrase for that, right? The Inuit have dozens of words for snow, surely they have a word for being torn between the past and the future. What about the Germans? Any language that comes up with *schadenfreude* (pleasure taken from someone else's pain) must have a term for being caught between what you've done and what you're about to do.

Perhaps I should stop being so analytical and just celebrate this crossroads for *Famous*.

You see, this is our 100th issue, so we've spent a lot of time looking at old copies and coming up with *Famous* trivia for our "100th Issue Quiz," page 26. But it's also the launch of our redesign, our first major facelift since issue No. 1 came out in November 1999. This bold new look comes courtesy of our extremely gifted art director, Matt Pickett. Going through this process with Matt was a delight, as he methodically revealed his reasons for every new line, dot, font and colour. This dynamic update will propel us into a new era, where design and content work hand in hand to make *Famous* better than ever.

Credit for our past (and future) successes also goes to my wingman, deputy editor Ingrid Randoja. Among the many things Ingrid brings to this magazine is her encyclopaedic knowledge of movies and the sense of humour she winds through everything she writes. Unless she's writing about something depressing, of course. Because that would be inappropriate.

And one more thank you. Our publisher Salah Bachir had a vision for this magazine even before I was brought on-board to create that first issue. One of the first things he said to me was that he didn't want *Famous* to be a gossip magazine. Fortunately, I agreed. Over the years, as entertainment outlets around us delved deeper and deeper into the sordid and tedious personal lives of certain celebrities, we stuck to that vision, which I believe has set us apart.

So, on to the stories.

On page 40 you'll find "It's High Time," our chat with **Kal Penn** and **John Cho** about how their stoner sequel, *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*, actually elevates the cause of Asian-Americans.

Turn to "The Direct Approach," page 36, to read about *Then She Found Me*, the movie **Helen Hunt** stars in, wrote and directed. No wonder she's been working on it for a decade.

And in "How's Trix?," page 44, cover girl **Christina Ricci** reveals why the summer blockbuster *Speed Racer* was cool enough to pull her off the indie circuit. By the way, Ricci was also featured on the very first cover of *Famous*, for *Sleepy Hollow*. (I just gave you the first answer to that "100th Issue Quiz.")

Marni Weisz, editor

Famous

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SAVING THE WORLD... AND LOVING IT.



STEVE CARELL ANNE HATHAWAY DWAYNE JOHNSON ALAN ARKIN

GET SMART

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AN ALCON ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION
A FILM BY PETER SEGAL
STEVE CARELL ANNE HATHAWAY DWAYNE JOHNSON ALAN ARKIN
"GET SMART" TERRILL STAMP AND JAMES GAGAN
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DIRECTED BY PETER SEGAL
CASTING BY JILL HEIGHWAY
COSTUME DESIGNER JILL HEIGHWAY
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY JILL HEIGHWAY
PRODUCTION DESIGNER JILL HEIGHWAY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS PETER SEGAL STEVE CARELL DEBBI CONNOR JIMMY MILLER
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WRITTEN BY PETER SEGAL STEVE CARELL DEBBI CONNOR JIMMY MILLER
DIRECTED BY PETER SEGAL

6-20

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE»



BECOMING FAMOUS

When we started working on *Famous* in 1999 there were a few things we knew. We wanted to concentrate on movies and the actors who make them, rather than gossip. We wanted to cater to people who love movies and appreciate seeing them the way they were meant to be seen, on the big screen. And we wanted to provide fresh insights and behind-the-scenes stories for all moviegoers, young and old, male and female. On all accounts, I feel we've succeeded.

Thank you to those who've helped *Famous* stay true to that vision over our first 100 issues. First to John Bailey, who gave us our initial opportunity with Famous Players, and to Ellis Jacob and Dan McGrath who supported our ideals once we joined Cineplex Entertainment. Thanks to the advertisers who believed in what we were doing and

wanted to be a part of it. Thanks to our readers, who made us the most-read entertainment magazine in Canada. Thanks also to our staff, Cathy Prowse, who's been with us since Day One, production manager Sheila Gregory, and the entire sales team at Cineplex Media.

And, of course, thanks to our passionate editorial department — deputy editor Ingrid Randoja, art director Matt Pickett (creator of this fantastic redesign), deputy art director Aliza Klein, *Famous Québec* editor Mathieu Chantelois and *Famous* editor Marni Weisz, who has always maintained the highest editorial standards and appreciated that content is the key to any successful publication. Bravo!

Salah Bachir, Publisher



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CAUGHT ON FILM

HAYDEN CHRISTENSEN
RACHEL BILSON
EDWARD NORTON
JAMES FRANCO
SCARLETT JOHANSSON
KEVIN SPACEY
KATE BOSWORTH



1 If you recognized this first-time director as Scarlett Johansson then you really know your noses. Johansson protects herself from the cold on the Brooklyn set of *New York, I Love You*, a feature film comprised of 12 shorts about the Big Apple. Hers stars Kevin Bacon.

PHOTO BY ASADORIAN-MEJIA/SPLASH-KEYSTONE

2 "Did you see how much shrimp I downed at the all-you-can-eat buffet?" Kevin Spacey and Kate Bosworth hit the blackjack table in Vegas. They were there to promote *21* at ShoWest.

PHOTO BY RYAN MILLER/GETTY

3 Watcha reading? A moustachioed James Franco eats lunch in a UCLA cafeteria. The 29-year-old actor reluctantly quit university when his career took off, but recently returned and has been working on his honours thesis in creative writing.

PHOTO BY TOM VICKERS/SPLASH-KEYSTONE

4 Serenity now. Edward Norton and a group of friends watch the sunset on a beach in Venice, California.

PHOTO BY TOM VICKERS/SPLASH-KEYSTONE

5 You know what we love best about this pic of Hayden Christensen helping lady-friend Rachel Bilson over a massive snow bank during a recent visit to his Toronto home? That she managed to hold on to her coffee the whole time. Is that a Tim Hortons cup?

PHOTO BY TODD G/SPLASH-KEYSTONE

ENTERTAINMENT IN BRIEF

George Clooney's leather man; Heath Ledger's final portrait; Ugly Betty's a doll



PROTECTING CLOONEY'S NOGGIN

If you're going to make a movie called *Leatherheads* you better have the leather needed to cover those heads.

That was the problem facing the film's director and star, George Clooney. The movie is set in the emerging world of pro football during the 1920s, and "leatherheads" refers to the players and their leather helmets. Problem is, those antique helmets are almost impossible to find, so the filmmakers called Marv Lubinsky (seen right), vintage sports equipment expert and owner of Past Time Sports, to handcraft 24 helmets and 60 old-style footballs called "watermelons."

The former saddle maker used 37 separate pieces of leather to make the LG Cordovan Rust helmet worn by Clooney. "Although you can see the team wearing different styles," says Lubinsky on the line from his office in Richardson, Texas. "Some of the bigger guys are wearing an earlier style from 1915 called a Dog-Ear helmet, which is also ours."

With America's obsession with football you'd think there would be lots of old helmets lying around. "They just didn't save them," explains Lubinsky. "They got so hard and crusty and started to smell in the locker rooms, and we talked to many coaches who told us they literally hauled them to the dump and burned them." —IR



Artifact

THIS MONTH'S OBJET DE FILM » HEATH LEDGER'S FINAL PORTRAIT

Below, you see the final professional portrait painted of Heath Ledger. The late actor sat for Melbourne artist Vincent Fantauzzo in December of 2007, less than two months before his death in January. The session took place at Ledger's family home in Perth, Australia, while Ledger's mom made tea and crumpets for the boys. Fantauzzo says Ledger helped come up with the painting's haunting theme, about the competing voices in his head. Fantauzzo asked Ledger's family for permission before entering the portrait in last month's Archibald Prize competition — it was a finalist, but didn't win. Fantauzzo plans to give the portrait to Ledger's family. —MW



I have two things on my to-do list:
to play and to play.

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■ Mark Wahlberg on the Toronto set of *Max Payne*. He'll be here through the end of May



ON HOME TURF FILMS SHOOTING ACROSS CANADA THIS MONTH

→ **Mark Wahlberg's** working on **Toronto's** streets until the end of May. He's in town to play the title character — a DEA cop out to avenge the deaths of his wife and child — in the videogame-inspired thriller *Max Payne*.

→ *Transformers'* **Megan Fox** and **Amanda Seyfried** of *Mean Girls* fame are in **Vancouver** shooting *Jennifer's Body* until mid-May. Written by *Juno* scribe Diablo Cody, the movie follows a possessed cheerleader (Fox) who's snuffing out her male classmates, and the friend (Seyfried) trying to stop her.

→ *I Love You, Beth Cooper* is currently shooting in **Vancouver** with *Heroes'* **Hayden Panettiere** playing a popular high school student who's the object of a nerdy valedictorian's affections.

→ If you're in **Toronto**, look out for a waifish brunette in aviator glasses and a bomber jacket. It might be **Hilary Swank**, who's in town until the end of this month shooting *Amelia*, the life story of lady pilot Amelia Earhart. Hope it ends well.

All shooting schedules are subject to change. —MW



WHAT A DOLL

Darn that writers' strike! America Ferrera fans who've been missing their muse since *Ugly Betty* went into reruns have two choices this month. They can catch Ferrera in *Under the Same Moon*, a Mexican/U.S. co-production that mines the volatile U.S. immigration debate and has a limited theatrical release starting April 4th. Or they can pre-order this eight-inch porcelain homage to *Mode* magazine's fashion-challenged moral compass. Created by the 80-year-old doll company Madame Alexander, the keepsake is decked out in Betty's famous Guadalajara poncho and clashing skirt, ships next month and will set you back \$70 [U.S.]. —MW

MICK AND MARTY'S SPECIAL SONG

It makes perfect sense that the Rolling Stones would want Martin Scorsese to direct their concert pic/documentary *Shine a Light*, considering Scorsese loves to include their music in his movies.

The filmmaker has used 10 Stones tunes in four of his films — *Mean Streets*, *Goodfellas*, *Casino* and *The Departed* — but he's used the same song three times. Can you guess which song appears in the soundtrack of *Goodfellas*, *Casino* and *The Departed*? (Answer below.) —IR

ANSWER: „3L7EHS 3W1W1Q„



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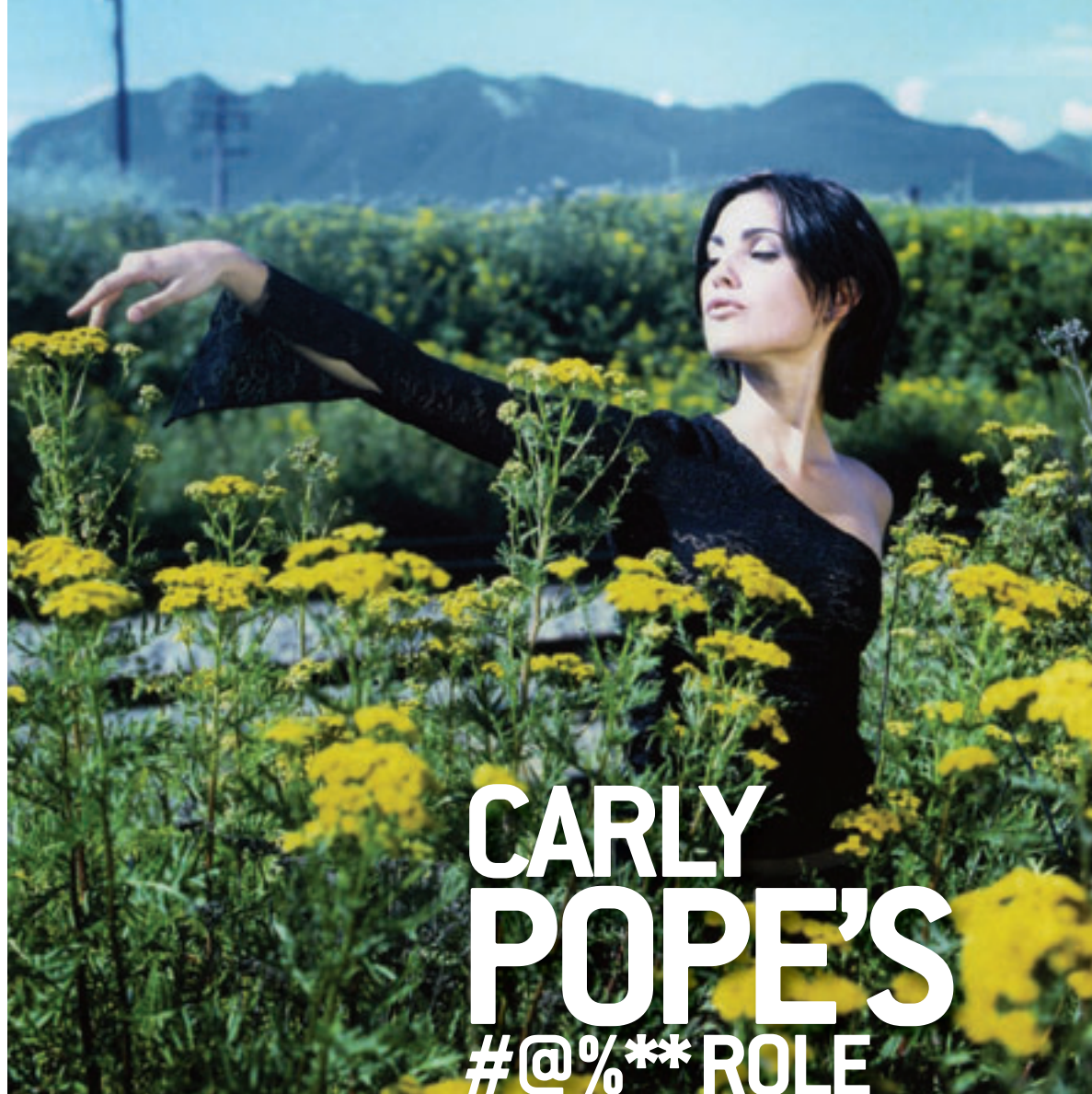


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SPOTLIGHT



CARLY POPE'S #@%** ROLE

She's the actor with the pious-sounding name who's appearing in the year's raunchiest titled film. Carly Pope stars in next month's *Young People F--king*, a Canadian drama about five couples having sex. Pope's character, Kristen, and her partner, Matt (Aaron Abrams), are pals who add a sexual element to their friendship. "[Kris and Matt] have this safeguard that's been created because they're friends," says Pope on the line from L.A. "They are platonic, but you quickly see under the layers that it's not that simple."

It's the latest in a string of provocative parts for the 27-year-old Vancouver native. She played a militant lesbian in last year's little-seen *Itty Bitty Titty Committee* and a lesbian drug dealer on TV's *Dirt*.

"My résumé is starting to look a bit scandalous," she says. "But I do feel that's where my integrity is as an actor and as a person...I

want to try and make statements about what I feel is important."

It was while performing in a high school play that an agent saw — and immediately signed — Pope. She left for L.A. six months after graduation and promptly landed the role of geeky Sam in the WB teen series *Popular*. When *Popular* was yanked in 2001, Pope shed her geek image and landed dozens of TV projects and films. Yet, she's never starred in anything as audaciously titled as *Young People F--king*, three words that make even her supportive family members flinch.

"It's hilarious," she says, "the first thing my mom said to me when I told her I was going to do the movie was, 'What are we going to tell your grandparents?' And the first thing my boyfriend's parents said to me was, 'We're not going to tell his grandparents.'" □

Ingrid Randoja

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IN THEATRES

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO NEW RELEASES **BY INGRID RANDOJA**

April



Huddle up. From left: George Clooney, John Krasinski and Renée Zellweger in *Leatherheads*

APRIL 4

Leatherheads

WHO'S IN IT?

George Clooney, Renée Zellweger

WHO DIRECTED?

George Clooney (*Good Night, and Good Luck.*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Clooney studied '30s screwball comedies to find just the right tone for this flick he stars in and directs. He plays a 1920s pro football player-coach who drafts a popular college star and WWI hero (John Krasinski) to play for his struggling team. However, a nosy newswoman (Zellweger) thinks the war hero is a phony and sets out to expose him.

Shine a Light

WHO'S IN IT?

The Rolling Stones

WHO DIRECTED?

Martin Scorsese (*The Departed*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

In the autumn of 2006, the Rolling Stones invaded New York's famed Beacon Theatre to play a concert in front of friends and director Martin Scorsese's 16 movie cameras. Scorsese's documentary captures the intense behind-the-scenes shooting preparations and the concert itself, which includes guest appearances from Jack White, Buddy Guy, Christina Aguilera and audience member Bill Clinton.

Nim's Island

WHO'S IN IT?

Abigail Breslin, Jodie Foster

WHO DIRECTED?

Jennifer Flackett, Mark Levin

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Eleven-year-old Nim (Breslin) lives on a secluded tropical island with her scientist father Jack (Gerard Butler) and an assortment of animal pals. There's no TV, so she reads a lot and is a big fan of the series of books by reclusive writer Alexandra Rover (Foster). So when Jack goes missing while conducting an experiment, Nim calls on Rover (Foster) to make the perilous journey to her island and help find her dad.

The Ruins

WHO'S IN IT?

Shawn Ashmore, Jena Malone

WHO DIRECTED?

Carter Smith (debut)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

This adaptation of author Scott Smith's thriller sees six twentysomething tourists leave the safety of their Cancun resort to hike into the Mexican jungle and check out the ruins of an ancient Mayan temple where human sacrifices were once performed. However, the temple isn't a relic, it's a working operation, and these *turistas* experience a vacation to die for. **continued** ➔

JACKIE CHAN ET LI



THE FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

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IN THEATRES APRIL 18

→→→ **My Blueberry Nights**

WHO'S IN IT?

Norah Jones, Jude Law

WHO DIRECTED?

Kar Wai Wong (2046)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

A kiss from New York City café owner Jeremy (Law) sends the broken-hearted Elizabeth (Jones) on a journey across America, during which she meets a collection of other romantically challenged folk. From the nice-work-if-you-can-get-it department: the kissing scene between Law and Jones took more than 150 takes.

APRIL 11

Smart People

WHO'S IN IT?

Ellen Page, Dennis Quaid

WHO DIRECTED?

Noam Murro (debut)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Page follows her Oscar-nominated turn in *Juno* with another role as a lippy teen, in this case the conservative daughter of a self-absorbed college prof (Quaid) dealing with a medical condition and the arrival of his freeloading brother (Thomas Haden Church).

The Metropolitan Opera

Enjoy performances from New York's renowned Metropolitan Opera. Check **Cineplex.com** for a list of participating theatres and to buy tickets.

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Live: Saturday, April 5,
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Encore: Saturday, April 12,
12:30 p.m. EST

LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT
(DONIZETTI)

Live: Saturday, April 26,
1:30 p.m. EST

Prom Night

WHO'S IN IT?

Brittany Snow, Dana Davis

WHO DIRECTED?

Nelson McCormick

(*For Which He Stands*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

It used to be spiking the punch and wearing flats were the worst prom-night crimes you could commit. But in this horror pic, a psychotic killer stalks the girl of his dreams (Snow) to the hotel hosting her high school prom and promptly begins to pick off her BFFs and totally ruin her special night.

Street Kings

WHO'S IN IT?

Keanu Reeves, Forest Whitaker

WHO DIRECTED?

David Ayer (*Harsh Times*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Writer/director Ayer's obsession with corrupt L.A.P.D. cops — he wrote *Training Day*, and wrote and directed *Harsh Times* — continues with this flick about a veteran L.A. officer (Reeves) framed for a murder.

APRIL 18

88 Minutes

WHO'S IN IT?

Al Pacino, Neal McDonough

WHO DIRECTED?

Jon Avnet (*Red Corner*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

A psychiatrist (Pacino) who helped convict a serial killer (McDonough) gets a phone call on the eve of the execution telling him he has 88 minutes to live.

Pathology

WHO'S IN IT?

Milo Ventimiglia, Alyssa Milano

WHO DIRECTED?

Marc Schoelermann (debut)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

A group of med students with way too much time on their hands compete to see who can figure out the best way to kill a person without getting caught.



Al Pacino prepares for the worst in *88 Minutes*

The Forbidden Kingdom

WHO'S IN IT?

Michael Angarano, Jet Li

WHO DIRECTED?

Rob Minkoff (*Stuart Little*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

When an American teen (Angarano) finds an old samurai sword he's whisked back to ancient China, where he's mistaken for a monk and joins a group of warriors journeying to free the Monkey King (Li). This movie marks the first time martial arts legends Li and Jackie Chan appear together in the same film.

Forgetting Sarah Marshall

WHO'S IN IT?

Jason Segel, Kristen Bell

WHO DIRECTED?

Nicholas Stoller (debut)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Poor Peter (Segel). Sarah (Bell) — his TV-star girlfriend — dumps him and hooks up with an English rock star. To console himself, Peter heads to Hawaii where he just happens to be staying at the same resort as his ex and her new beau.

continued →

Tina Fey Amy Poehler

Greg Kinnear Dax Shepard Sigourney Weaver



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ON SCREEN»

→→→ **APRIL 25**

Harold & Kumar Escape From Guantanamo Bay

WHO'S IN IT?

Kal Penn, John Cho

WHO DIRECTED?

Jon Hurwitz, Hayden Schlossberg

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Picking up where *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle* left off, this sequel finds the stoner pals (Cho, Penn) mistaken for terrorists and whisked away to America's most notorious detention centre. See Kal Penn and John Cho interview, page 40.

Baby Mama

WHO'S IN IT?

Tina Fey, Amy Poehler

WHO DIRECTED?

Michael McCullers (debut)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Kate Holbrook (Fey) is 37,

successful, single and wants to have a baby. When she discovers there's very little chance she can have one of her own, she hires the brassy Angie (Poehler) to be her surrogate mother. However, Kate didn't expect the unkempt Angie to move in with her and turn her anal existence upside down.

Then She Found Me

WHO'S IN IT?

Helen Hunt, Colin Firth

WHO DIRECTED?

Helen Hunt (debut)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Actor Helen Hunt makes her writing/directing debut with this dramedy about an elementary school teacher (Hunt) whose life unravels when her brand-new husband (Matthew Broderick) dumps her, she meets her famous and eccentric birth

mother (Bette Midler), falls for a single dad (Firth) and sets out to have a baby. See Helen Hunt interview, page 36.

APRIL 27

WWE-Pay-Per-View BACKLASH

Look for WrestleMania grudge matches to get ugly at this year's Backlash! Check Cineplex.com for a list of theatres where you can watch it live, and to buy tickets.

MAY 9

Speed Racer

WHO'S IN IT?

Emile Hirsch, Christina Ricci

WHO DIRECTED?

Larry and Andy Wachowski

(*The Matrix Revolutions*)

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

The world's top race car driver (Hirsch) discovers races are being fixed. So he and girlfriend Trixie (Ricci) set out to expose the corruption. See Christina Ricci interview, page 44.

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100th ISSUE QUIZ

100 STORY MEETINGS,

100 deadlines, 100 press approvals and, as you can see to the right, 100 covers. It feels as though the first 100 issues of *Famous* have just flown by. Has it really been more than eight years since Johnny Depp and Christina Ricci stared out from our very first cover? Over those 100 issues we've watched as megastars turned into has-beens and nobodies turned into megastars. Such is the way with fickle Hollywood, and we love it.

Now we take you back through the pages of *Famous* history with our 100th Issue Quiz. Think hard, trust your gut, and test your recall of the past nine years in movies...at least, as *Famous* saw them.

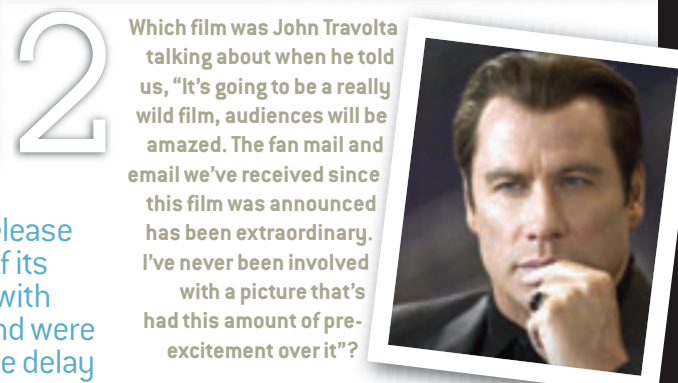
continued →



Famous

BOLD NEW LOOK

APRIL 2008 • VOLUME 9 • NUMBER 4



→→→ This month's cover girl, Christina Ricci, also appeared on the cover of our very first issue for the movie shown here. Name that movie. **Clue:** We launched in November 1999.

1

3 In the wake of September 11th an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie set for release in October 2001 was delayed because of its terrorism themes. We had an interview with Schwarzenegger in the October issue and were forced to slap a disclaimer explaining the delay across the page, since the magazine was already on press and it was too late to pull the piece. Name the movie.
a) *Collateral Damage* b) *End of Days*
c) *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*

3

2

Which film was John Travolta talking about when he told us, "It's going to be a really wild film, audiences will be amazed. The fan mail and email we've received since this film was announced has been extraordinary. I've never been involved with a picture that's had this amount of pre-excitement over it"?

4

Which comic book-based trilogy snagged *Famous* covers all three times?

Which trilogy not based on a comic book snagged *Famous* covers all three times?

We've interviewed **Jennifer Lopez** for all three of the movies shown here. Name them.

5

continued →



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FILL IN THE MOVIE TITLE.

Ben Affleck told us about one of his films, “_____ was the *Ishtar* of our times because it didn’t work and there was a lot of attention paid to it. The first time I saw it, I knew that it was a dog.”



6

7 Shortly before his 2002 death, which actor told *Famous*, “You know how it’ll end up, don’t you? After a long career, and a couple of Academy Award nominations, and a couple of Golden Globes, and all the things I’ve done, I’ll just end up being remembered as Dumbledore?”

8 Which recently deceased actor told *Famous*, “I can’t work with a guy just because he’s a brilliant actor or director. If he’s a prick I can’t just ignore it, I’ll tell him. Or hit ‘im.”



9

Who was Dennis Quaid talking about when he told *Famous*, “I honestly expected people to start calling me Mr. _____. I was struggling to find good roles, and it was all the more frustrating because I was married to someone who was getting everything handed to her on a silver platter.”

10 This issue features our second interview with Helen Hunt. The first interview was in December 2000, when she was starring in two big movies — one opposite Tom Hanks, and the other opposite Mel Gibson. Name those flicks.



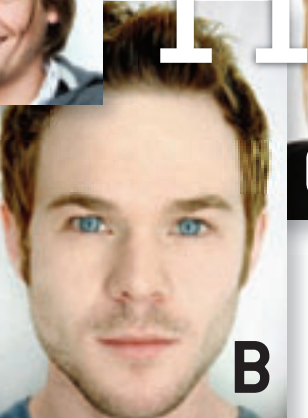
A



11



C



B

Answers

1. *Sleepy Hollow*
2. *Battlefield Earth*
3. A) *Collateral Damage*
4. *Spider-Man*
5. A) *The Cell*
6. *Shall We Dance*
7. Richard Harris
8. Heath Ledger
9. Meg Ryan
10. *Cast Away* and *What Women Want*
11. A) Kevin Zegers; B) Shawn Ashmore; C) Marie-Josée Croze

Montreal photographer **Jocelyn Michel** has contributed some fantastic images of Canadian actors to *Famous*. Name the Canuck thespns in these Michel photos.



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- One of 100 **The Golden Compass** DVDs
- One of 10 **How She Move** DVDs
- One of 20 pairs of **Skechers** footwear, either the "Bikers Dreamy" slip-on, or "Genesis Footloose" loafer
- One of nine wallets and nine bags from **gsus industries**
- One of 100 **Hugo XX** and 100 **Hugo XY** fragrances
- One of 20 PINs worth 30,000 **iCoke Coins™**

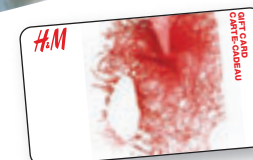


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THE DIRECT APPROACH

Haven't heard much about **Helen Hunt** lately? You're not alone. The former sitcom star and Oscar winner drifted from the spotlight years ago. But now the no-nonsense actor is returning to the big screen, and with her directing debut, no less **BY INGRID RANDOJA**

H

elen Hunt was eight years old when she started studying acting with her father, Gordon Hunt, a director and acting coach.

By 38 her list of acting awards included an Oscar, four Emmys, four Golden Globes, two Screen Actors Guild Awards and four American Comedy Awards.

She had mastered the art of TV acting — her sitcom *Mad About You* was considered “must-see TV” for most of the '90s — tackled Broadway, and proved she was big-screen worthy, winning a Best Actress Oscar in 1998 for her nuanced turn as a waitress coping with a sick child and an irrational Jack Nicholson in *As Good as It Gets*.

So you understand why Helen Hunt was ready for a new challenge, like writing and directing a movie of her own. It took 10 years for the now 44-year-old Hunt to complete *Then She Found Me*, based on the novel by Elinor Lipman.

The dramedy stars Hunt as April Epner, a 39-year-old school teacher whose mother dies the day after her new husband (Matthew Broderick) leaves her. If that's not stressful enough, April, who was adopted, learns larger-than-life TV personality Bernice Graves (Bette Midler) is her birth mother and wants to be part of her life. Plus, April is des-

perate to have a baby, and is falling for divorced dad Frank (Colin Firth).

Hunt was on the phone from L.A. when we spoke about her directing debut.

Q: *Then She Found Me* screened at last fall's Toronto International Film Festival where it made a splash and was bought for \$2.5-million [U.S.]. How did that make you feel?

A: “It was wonderful. I thought it was entirely possible that I would fly home after what would be the first and last screening of the movie, but when 2,000 people gave it a standing ovation and it was bought that night at 2:30 in the morning, it was a pretty terrific Cinderella moment for me.”

Q: Your movie's very different from the novel.

A: “I tried to get it made as a faithful adaptation of the book for a long time, and when I wasn't able to do it I put it away for a while. And then one of the things that occurred to me that might be missing was a real sense of what the protagonist, April, wanted. And then it occurred to me that if you are a 30- or 40-year-old woman you either have a baby, don't have a baby, or either want a **continued** →



Helen Hunt directs her first feature, *Then She Found Me*. Inset: As April Epner in the film



Sleepover: Frank (Colin Firth), his kids and April (Helen Hunt) bed down

→→→ baby or don't want a baby. You don't feel 'nothing' about a baby, so probably she should want a baby. Once that piece fell into place and once I got clear that I was interested in telling a story about betrayal and trust it suddenly became less of an effort."

Q: The movie is about April dealing with control. At some points she takes complete control of her life, and at other moments she gives up control.

A: "Right, total control or no control. I feel like I do a dance with those two issues myself, and the more I make peace with not having control the better off I am."

Q: And at one point April realizes it's her body that's really in control of her life.

A: "Yeah, that's the ultimate of not being in control — wanting a baby and not knowing if you are going to get it."

Q: Tell me about working with Bette Midler. I think people forget she starred in a movie like *The Rose*, which really demonstrated her acting talent.

A: "I knew I needed someone who had an iconic quality because her character in the movie isn't as famous as Bette Midler, but she thinks that she is. So it couldn't be just any actor. And I did look at *The Rose* again because it's the movie of hers that's similar in tone to this movie, and I just saw the power of that performance. And that doesn't

happen because someone gets lucky, or is manipulated by a director, that's talent and she's just got megadoses of talent. And she is so smart, she heard the subtlety I wanted to bring to her character and how I wanted her character to be betraying us as an audience constantly by being trustworthy one moment and then diabolical the next. She was scared of that, but willing."

Q: Any surprises about the directing?

A: "I can't say I was surprised, but just the sheer volume and intensity of effort, there is no way to quantify that until you are in it. I will say that it is sort of a psychotropic experience to deal with that many different personalities at one time, and to be the person who is the container for everyone else's personalities. You've got an introvert over here, an angry extrovert over there, and on your right a superprepared person, on your left a forgetful guy, and you have to be big enough to contain all of it. That was a challenge."

Q: You starred in *Bobby* two years ago, which was Emilio Estevez's dream project. Did you watch him, study the way in which he directed?

A: "I have not stopped staring at directors trying to figure out how they do what they do for the last 10 years. Then *She Found Me* was close to getting made when I did *Bobby*, and I saw Emilio make, in a way, the same thing as me — I made a big movie on a little

DID YA KNOW?

You might not realize it, but Helen Hunt holds Gretzky-like records in the entertainment world. A few performers have matched some of her achievements, and undoubtedly others will come along and do the same, but will one actor — male or female — ever match the Helen Hunt hat trick?

- Only the third actor (with Helen Mirren and Liza Minnelli) to win a Golden Globe, Oscar and Emmy in the same year. She did it in 1998 — the Oscar and Globe for *As Good as It Gets*, the Emmy for *Mad About You*.
- The only actor to win four Emmys in a row (1995-1998 for *Mad About You*)
- Only the second actor (after Cloris Leachman) to win an Oscar while appearing on a TV series.

budget, he made an enormous movie on a little budget. And I just watched him handle it with such grace and kindness, and talk about containing personalities, he had Martin Sheen and Lindsay Lohan and Sharon Stone and me. It doesn't get more diverse than that. And I remember saying to myself, 'This is setting the bar, you have to be this kind and this graceful with the people who show up to make your movie.'"

Q: Are you going to direct again?

A: "I am. I wrote another movie and I have no objectivity about how mediocre it is [laughs], but I am going to do it again."

Q: Think it'll be easier the second time?

A: "I think the bait that I will bite on is that I think it will be easier the second time, and it will probably turn out that it will not be easier in ways that I cannot even imagine."

Q: There aren't many female directors in Hollywood. What's your take on that?

A: "Why has it been 200 years before a woman's run for president? I have no idea why it's all so backwards, I really can't shed any light. I just have to believe, hope, pray, wish that the world, or our bizarre little portion of it, is moving towards some version of gender-racial blindness." ■

Ingrid Randoja is the deputy editor of *Famous*.



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IT'S HIGHTIME

John Cho (left) and Kal Penn light up the screen in *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*

Kal Penn and **John Cho** say portraying Asian-Americans as drug-addled doofuses breaks down stereotypes by putting their characters on an even playing field with the world's other drug-addled doofuses. Of course, that's not the only political message in their highly anticipated sequel *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* ➔ **BY BOB STRAUSS**

Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle was the first movie to feature smart Asian-Americans behaving like the same kind of idiots you find in most Hollywood comedies.

And it was almost the last.

"There was a huge question about whether there would even be a sequel," admits Kal Penn, who plays the brilliant but bong-addled Indian half of the baked duo. "The first movie didn't do very well at all at the box office. I think it barely cracked \$18-million [U.S.]; it only cost \$6-million to make, but they spent more than that on advertising."

Nevertheless, four years later we have *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*, in which Penn's Kumar Patel and co-star John Cho's Harold Lee find themselves mistaken for Islamic and North Korean

terrorists and pursued from the high security installation to a pants-optional pool party and beyond by clueless but determined feds.

How did this happen?

"When [*White Castle*] came out on DVD, fans bought it for each other and rented it when they had people coming over," Penn explains via phone from Nevada, where he's doing college outreach work for the Barack Obama campaign while his hit TV series *House* is on hiatus because of the writers strike. "It developed this huge cult following, without which we certainly would not have been able to make the second one."

"I have gotten a lot of, as they say, props on the street, which has been great," says the Seoul-born, L.A.-raised Cho **continued ➔**

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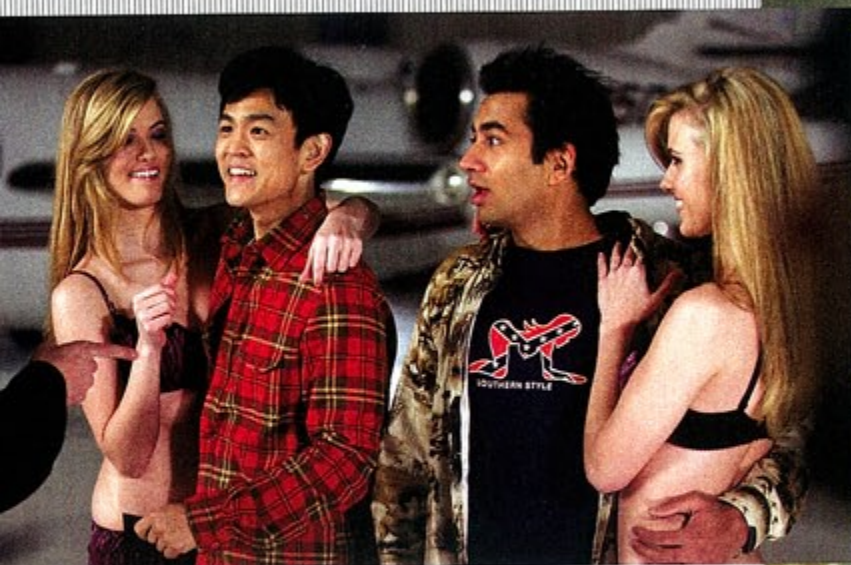
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"There's definitely a lot of political satire in this one," says Penn. "I'm a big politics buff, and when I read this script I thought it was awesome that we got to play with all these different layers. But it's certainly from a non-partisan angle"



Clockwise from left: Harold and Kumar get some action; the boys find themselves imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay; Neil Patrick Harris returns, as himself



and when I read this script I thought it was awesome that we got to play with all of these different layers. But it's certainly from a non-partisan angle, we're not making fun of Democrats or Republicans at all. We're just making fun of how things are in the country right now."

"I'm not sure that the movie really takes a hardline political stance on anything," Cho says. "It just seemed like a fun way to get them in a whole mess of trouble, more than anything else, to really increase the stakes. But, personally? I love that angle. It makes the movie a little bit more alive for me, connects it to our time a little bit stronger."

Despite its limited box office, *White Castle* made its stars bankable in Hollywood. Beside the *House* gig, since the movie came out Penn has done a run of 24 episodes, had a small part in *Superman Returns*, headlined several other stupid comedies, and got raves for his lead role in the adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri's beloved novel *The Namesake*.

Cho, who first got noticed in the *American Pie* films and acclaimed ethnic indies such as *Yellow* and *Better Luck Tomorrow*, has been a ubiquitous TV guest star, and in *Sulu* is reviving what may be the best-known Asian TV character of all.

Their work schedules have kept the guys apart, mostly, for the past four years. But they'd get together more if they could.

"We're real friends, although we don't see as much of each other as we'd like," Cho says. "We didn't know each other prior to the first movie, but we became friends and have remained in touch."

"John's awesome," Penn enthuses. "It's funny; I think it was after the first couple of weeks of shooting that we both realized we each could have pretended that we liked each other, but it was kind of cool that we actually got along."

Not that they're anything like one another, or their movie roles. "We're really closer to each other's characters, meaning Kal's more reserved," Cho says. "He's so much more of a Harold in real life and I'm much more of a Kumar. It's kind of like, on set, I was trying to do him."

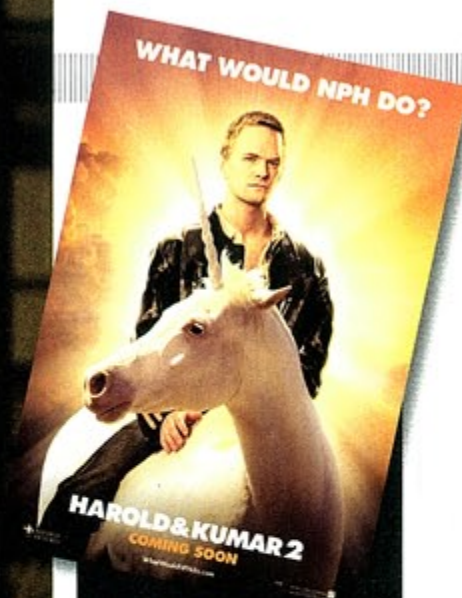
"It throws people off when they meet us on the street," Penn says. As Penn heads back out on the campaign trail, the question once again arises about why a goofy stoner comedy has meant so much to

an underrepresented segment of the movie-going market.

"I kind of grew up without any people in the media who looked like me, so I completely understand the sentiment," Penn says. "The only real images I remember seeing were Apu from *The Simpsons* and all the guys in brownface in *Indiana Jones* and *the Temple of Doom* eating monkey brains. And neither... well, one's a cartoon, and the other is just racist and inaccurate."

"So, of course, it's great that there's finally a movie about guys doing what guys do," adds Penn, "and it just so happens that these guys happen to be Korean and Indian." □

Bob Strauss writes about movies and entertainment from his home in Los Angeles.



Neil Patrick Harris RIDES HIGH

One of the funniest parts of 2004's *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle* was Neil Patrick Harris's parody of, well, Neil Patrick Harris.

Harris, the former child star best known as TV's Doogie Howser, M.D., played a version of himself as a lecherous, skirt-chasing, druggie who snorts cocaine off of a stripper's chest.

Harris is back for the sequel, and while a lot has changed for actor Neil Patrick Harris since *White Castle* was released—specifically that he came out as a gay man—not much seems to have changed for Neil Patrick Harris, the character, in this sequel that picks up exactly where the first movie left off.

As Harris told *New York Magazine*, "It's the very next day, so I'm still the same Neil Patrick Harris you saw before." He even told *Hollywood.com*, "I might brand my initials on the ass of a stripper."

Which doesn't really explain the poster.

HOW'S TRIX?

Anime fans are already in love with Trixie, the smart, strong and stylish heroine of the *Speed Racer* cartoon. Now **Christina Ricci** introduces the bob-haired auto aficionado to a whole new audience, and in so doing makes her first summer blockbuster **BY BILL GOODYKOONTZ**

It's so easy

for a young actor to be typecast. She's the pretty one. He's so funny. She's the girl next door. Being able to fit neatly into a box may help pad the résumé — and the wallet — early on, but it doesn't do those actors much good in the long run.

Christina Ricci's never had that problem. Just 28, the Santa Monica-born actor has put together an unusually varied filmography — not that there aren't labels for her, too.

Child actress? Check.

Indie standout? Yep.

She may not have the highest profile in Hollywood, but Ricci has had a remarkably imaginative career, ranging from critics' favourites (*Black Snake Moan*, *The Ice Storm*, *Monster*) to TV appearances (*Grey's Anatomy*, *Ally McBeal*) to award-winning short films (*Little Red Riding Hood*).

But there is one type of film that, until now, has been missing from Ricci's resume — the summer blockbuster. Get ready for Christina Ricci, action star.

Next month, Ricci stars in *Speed Racer*, the eye-candy spectacular that has fan boys, anime connoisseurs and devotees of Larry and Andy Wachowski, the writer-director team behind the *Matrix* movies, salivating.

It's a live-action adaptation of the hugely popular Japanese manga comic turned anime

series from the 1960s. Also known as *Mach GoGoGo* (its Japanese title), along with *Astroboy*, *Speed Racer* was one of the first cartoons to popularize anime in North America.

Ricci plays Trixie, the supportive girlfriend of the film's title character, Speed (Emile Hirsch). It's a role that, because of the film's reliance on computer-generated effects, required Ricci to spend a lot of time acting with...nobody.

"You're in a big green room, and that's pretty much it," Ricci says in a recent phone interview. "We'd be on these big green stages for hours, being told what is supposed to be over here, what's going to be over there, and acting out these scenes."

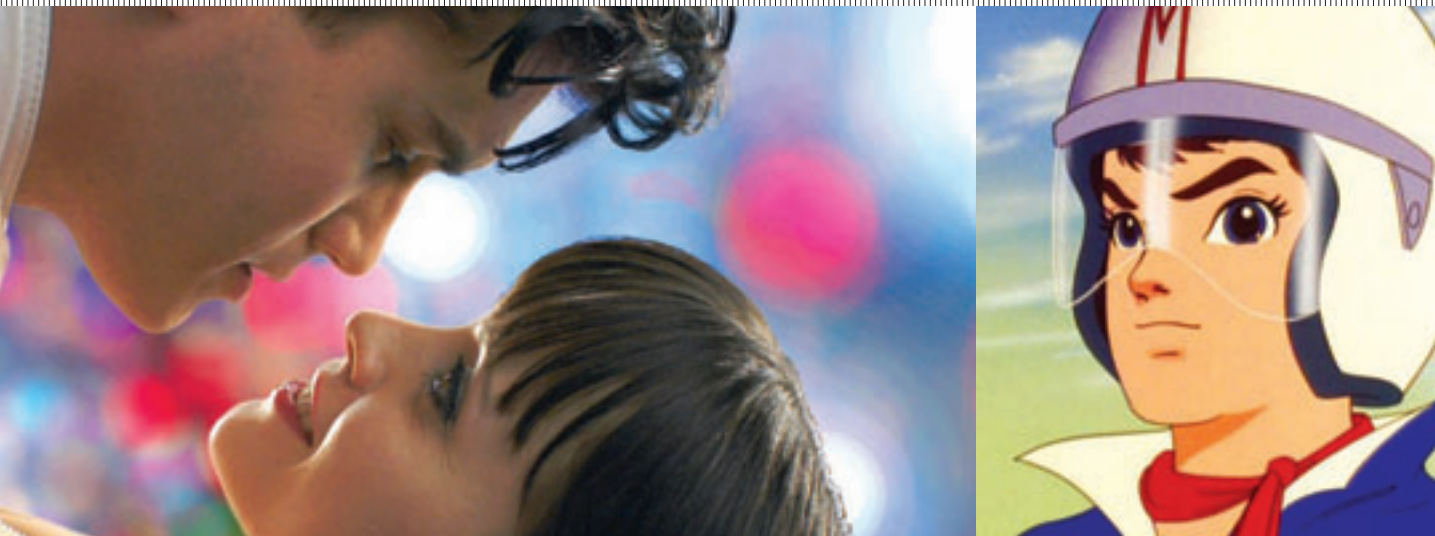
Not that she's complaining.

"Oh my God, it was the most fun I've ever had," she says. "You really just have to lose any sense of inhibition. You really rely on your imagination.... I think we all ended up relying so much on our imagination, and on Larry and Andy's imaginations. You really are brought back to sort of this kind of, like, existing like a child all day long."

A big-screen adaptation of *Speed Racer* has been in some form of development since the early '90s. Johnny Depp and Vince Vaughn were attached at various stages, along with such directors as Gus Van Sant **continued** >



Christina Ricci's Trixie
Opposite: Trixie as
conceived in the original
Japanese anime version
of *Speed Racer*



Speed (Emile Hirsch) and Trixie (Ricci) share a romantic moment. Right: The anime Speed

→→→ and Alfonso Cuarón, but those versions never got off the ground.

Finally, in 2006, the Wachowskis came on-board to write the script and direct — their first stint behind the camera since the final *Matrix* movie, 2003's *The Matrix Revolutions*. They shot at the oldest large-scale film studio in the world, Babelsberg Studios in Potsdam-Babelsberg, Germany, (near Berlin) and got \$13-million from that country's Federal Film Fund to help finance the production — the largest chunk of government deutsch marks given to any project to date.

The story revolves around Speed Racer (Hirsch), a fearless young driver who is out to win the Crucible, a cross-country rally; expose a race-fixing plot; and avenge the death of his brother, Rex Racer (Scott Porter). Trixie, meanwhile, flies in a pink helicopter above Speed's races and gives him advice about the course and other drivers. Ricci sees her character as a good role model for young girls — strong-willed and smart, but still supercute with a good fashion sense.

John Goodman plays Speed's father, Susan Sarandon's his mom and *Lost* star Matthew Fox is Racer X, Speed's former rival with whom he must create an alliance. (Fans will be glad to know the Wachowskis also bought the rights to the TV show's frenetic theme song, for which there is also a cult following.)

This is no indie fare, which makes it a very different kind of project for Ricci, whose films typically have lower profiles. "The more different something is, the better," she says. "You don't want to do something you've seen a million times before." **continued →**

Roles to **dye** for

Christina Ricci owes at least some of the credit for her eclectic career to her magical hair. With a snip here and a dye job there Ricci's locks transform her from Goth to sexpot to dowdy to waif. Our favourite? Her *Monster* mullet.

1. Addams Family Values (1993) **2. The Opposite of Sex** (1998) **3. Sleepy Hollow** (1999)
4. Prozac Nation (2001) **5. Pumpkin** (2002) **6. Monster** (2003) **7. Cursed** (2005)
8. Black Snake Moan (2006) **9. Penelope** (2008)



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in the September issue of **COSMO girl!**

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→→→ With the Wachowskis using their trademark cutting-edge technology — the film is shot in high-definition using a layering technique to mimic the anime style — *Speed Racer* promises to look and feel like nothing that's come before.

It certainly wasn't like anything Ricci had acted in before.

"When you have it on such an extreme level, where you really are literally having to imagine the furniture around you, then you really do kind of feel like a kid," she says.

Funny thing is, the last time Ricci starred opposite someone who wasn't there she was a kid — about 14 and sharing scenes with a CGI ghost in *Casper*. That's about the time she made her other mainstream hits, *The Addams Family* and *Addams Family Values*, starring as morose little Wednesday Addams. But since then Ricci has mostly followed a more offbeat path.

Veering toward the unusual has gotten her a lot of work and a fair amount of notice. She earned Golden Globe and Independent Spirit Award nominations for her role as a teenager who sleeps with her brother's boyfriend in *The Opposite of Sex*. She also won praise for her portrayal of Selby, the girlfriend of serial killer Aileen Wuornos (a role for which Charlize Theron won an Oscar) in *Monster*.

But Ricci's career has never exploded. She's never going to be confused with, say, Angelina Jolie.

On the other hand, she's not lumped in with the Britneys and Lindsays and Parises of the world, either. Indeed, in opposition to that terrible trio, Ricci is known for her work, not her personal life.



Trixie and Speed in the Mach 5

Polite yet confident, she talks about how she has, despite her relatively high-profile work, managed to steer clear of becoming a tabloid staple. The trick: Don't provide them with any fodder.

"I think people have a desire to give you some sort of public persona, certainly," Ricci says. "But I think it's also good if your persona isn't so strong that people can't lose who you are when they're watching you in a film."

So who is Ricci, then? Truly, with the exception of a few reasonably high-profile romances, like one with actor Adam Goldberg, and her admitted "flirtation" with anorexia, we know her almost exclusively from her roles, not from her love life or personal habits. Which is doubtless by design.

"I don't have a very incendiary life," she says. "I really don't. I don't go out a lot and I don't have, like, a string of crazy relationships with movie stars. There really isn't that much to write about me." ■

Bill Goodykoontz lives in Arizona where he is the chief film critic for Gannett News Service.

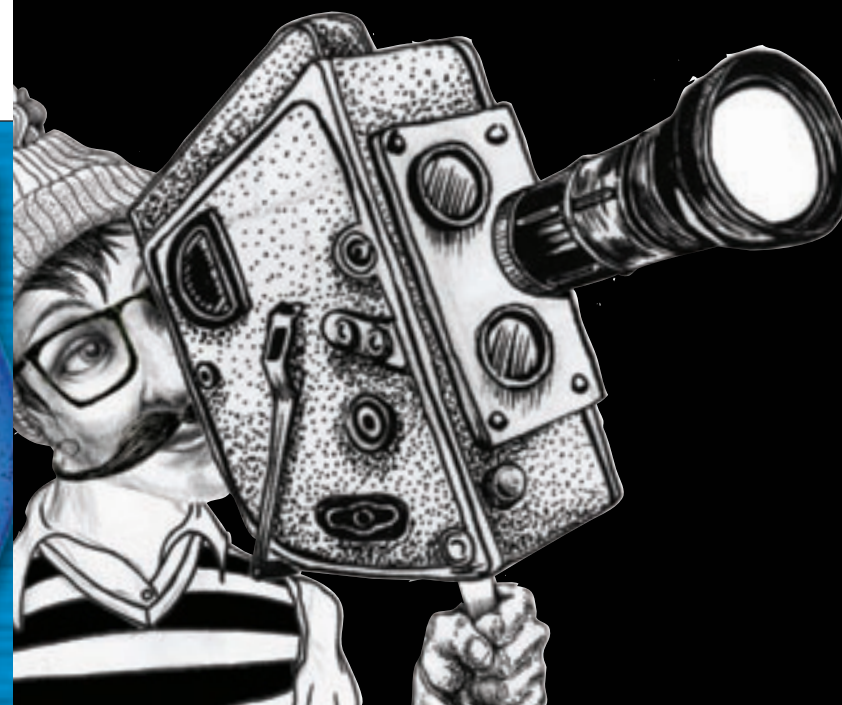
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SPRING PRINTS RULE

The season's runways offer eye-popping patterns ♡ BY LIZA HERZ



The bold graphic flowers splashed on a black background keep this **Printed Floral Dress** (\$108, Lucky Jeans, www.luckybrandjeans.com for stores) from looking too sugary-sweet.

By now that cozy dark sweater you bought last fall holds about as much appeal as a used tea bag. Winter, with its tendency toward big, overpadded garments and chunky footwear, is a season we're all happy to see go.

It just isn't possible to "love" your winter boots the way you might love a shiny new patent leather bag or a strappy new pair of sandals.

True to our giddiness about spring's arrival, designers have responded in kind, fusing bold colours with ethereal fabrics, patterns with pared-down silhouettes.

Choose your favourite new items now so that when the sun begins to actually generate heat, you can be out the door and celebrating the solstice in something beautiful.



MODERN TRIBAL

Here's a lesson in how to wear pattern so it doesn't wear you. Oscar de la Renta pairs a bold ethnic print with a clean-lined shift dress to put a hip spin on a traditional silhouette.



SUMMER OF LOVE

This boho maxi dress from Balmain revels in the fact that true luxury isn't about logos and cookie-cutter looks. Go long and sweeping with a big dose of pattern for a romantic sheen that steers clear of crunchy granola territory.



Bright colour, a big platform, adorable print lining — is the **Saurimo** (\$60, Spring by Transit) the ultimate shoe for spring?



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THE GOODS»

MUSIC MAKERS

Melanie C. takes the Spice out of life; Norah Jones' movie debut; Morrissey's biggest fan **BY INGRID RANDOJA**



Melanie C. ON HER OWN THIS TIME

Melanie C. is curled up on a hotel room couch the morning after The Spice Girls said goodbye to the world. The previous night, the planet's most successful girl group rocked Toronto's Air Canada Centre in their final concert together, and although she's exhausted, Melanie looks phenomenally fresh, and is eager to talk about her other musical life, the one in which no one calls her Sporty Spice. "I missed being Melanie C. — and that's no disrespect to Sporty Spice — but I truly feel I have a split personality

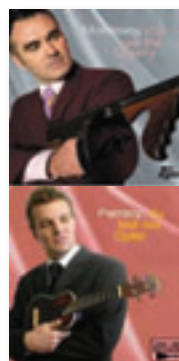
and there are two sides to me. I've really enjoyed being Sporty again, but I have really missed my own songs and being able to express myself as an individual, so I'm really looking forward to getting back to that." You can hear Melanie C.'s solo efforts on her new CD, *This Time* (in stores April 8th). It's her fourth solo CD, and unlike her previous works, *This Time* presents a more reflective, and dare we say, an almost demure Melanie C. "I think this is quite an easy album to listen to," she says. "I really wanted to have my vocals exposed on this album, and I'd like people to

feel quite cozy, relaxed and nourished by this album. "It was time for a change of pace so *This Time* feels like a more gentle take on the world. There are frustrations in there because I think that's a recurring theme in life, but it's definitely more romantic."

Singers On Screen

JONES LIGHTS UP NIGHTS

Norah Jones makes her big-screen acting debut this month in director Kar Wai Wong's long-delayed *My Blueberry Nights*. Jones plays a heartbroken woman who meets odd characters while travelling across America. Wong ensured Jones' natural acting style made it onto the screen intact by barring the singer from taking any acting lessons.



YOU GOTTA HEAR THIS

Morrissey's number one fan turns out to be a German singer named Perrecy, who makes a living covering the moody pop star's tunes (complete with ukulele accompaniment). Check out his version of "Panic" ("Panik") at www.myspace.com/perrecy07.

OUT THIS MONTH

APRIL 1 → The Black Keys - *Attack & Panic* → Moby - *Last Night* → R.E.M. - *Accelerate* **APRIL 8** → Gnarl Barkley - *The Odd Couple* → The Breeders - *Mountain Battle* **APRIL 15** → The Kooks - *Konk* → Phantom Planet - *Raise the Dead* → Constantines - *Kensington Heights* **APRIL 22** → Ashlee Simpson - *Bittersweet World* → Blind Melon - *For My Friends* **APRIL 29** → Madonna - *Hard Candy* → Portishead - *Third*

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Michael Bublé

Call Me Irresponsible

The Canadian crooner strikes gold again with his exquisite third full-length, *Call Me Irresponsible*. A balance of standards and original songs - including first single "Everything" - mark this as an instant vocal-jazz classic.



Feist

The Reminder

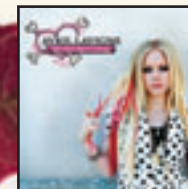
Includes the singles "My Moon, My Man" and "1234" as heard in the ubiquitous iPod commercials!



Anne Murray

Duets: Friends & Legends

Includes duets with Nelly Furtado, Shania Twain, Carole King, k.d. lang and Dusty Springfield.



Avril Lavigne

The Best Damn Thing

Includes the first single "Girlfriend"; "When You're Gone" and album highlight "I Don't Have To Try".



Celine Dion

Taking Chances

Taking Chances is Dion's 13th English-language album includes the first single — the album's title track.

Congratulations to this year's Juno Winners and Nominees and thank you for being original, innovative and always inspiring.

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HOTPLAY

Grand Theft Auto IV — bad enough to tick off Mayor Bloomberg ♦♦ BY SCOTT GARDNER



▶▶ **Grand Theft Auto IV** PS3, XBOX 360

“Life is complicated; I killed people, smuggled people, sold people. Perhaps here, things will be different,” rumbles Niko Bellic in a thick Eastern European accent. But since he’s starring in *Grand Theft Auto IV*, it ain’t likely.

Niko’s cousin Roman has lured him to Liberty City — a thinly veiled New York — with tales of champagne, supermodels and luxury SUVs. Instead, Roman’s driving a beat-up cab and in debt to some bad people. Niko, however, is also bad people, with thuggish skills to match his stubbly, beetle-browed mug.

And since a good bad guy is always in demand, Niko soon rises through the local underworld.

One of the most anticipated games of 2008, *GTA4* continues the open-ended gameplay of 2004’s 20-million-selling *GTA: San Andreas* with a mix of driving, fighting, shooting, roleplay and adventure, all rendered with the supercharged animation and detail you’d expect from the series’ first next-gen title.

As well as action, *GTA* games are also beloved for their realistically dysfunctional urban settings, humour and killer soundtracks. This time the tunes play over 18 in-game radio stations — complete with DJs — including one specializing in, gulp, Russian hip-hop.

And since the behaviour that makes you a successful crime lord doesn’t exactly get you nominated for Citizen of the Year, expect more controversy thanks to *GTA*’s trademark violence and adult nature. In fact, NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg has expressed displeasure about the game sullyng his fair city’s reputation because, of course, there’s never been a violent book, TV show or movie set in the Big Apple.

➔ **RELEASE DATE: APRIL 29**



Gran Turismo 5 Prologue PS3

Sony’s *Gran Turismo* series has kept gearheads drooling for 10 years. Finally arriving on PS3 with 60 obsessively detailed cars, the fans are gonna need bigger buckets. Available as a Blu-ray Disc or PlayStation Network download, “how’d they do that?” features include custom dashboards, reflecting rear and side mirrors and 16-car races.

➔ **RELEASE DATE: APRIL 17**



NBA Ballers: Chosen One PS3, X360

If you find regular roundball a little square, try some one-on-one or two-on-two streetball as an NBA superstar, battling for bling and bragging rights on outrageous luxury courts while Public Enemy’s Chuck D provides the play-by-play. And just how skilled are these guys? *Baller*’s custom movement system is actually based on *fighting* games.

➔ **RELEASE DATE: APRIL 29**

MARIAH

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APRIL 15



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DVD RELEASES

BIG MOVIES COMING TO THE SMALL SCREEN ◆ BY MARNI WEISZ

April

Johnny Depp's coiffeur confronts his prey (Alan Rickman) in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*

APRIL 1

Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street

STARS:

Johnny Depp, Alan Rickman

DIRECTOR:

Tim Burton (*Corpse Bride*)

STORY:

Years ago, innocent barber Benjamin Barker (Depp) was sent to jail so the judge (Rickman) could put the moves on his wife. Now returned to London under the pseudonym Sweeney Todd, Barker's out for revenge and doesn't care how many throats he has to slit to get it. **DVD Extras:** "Burton + Depp + Carter = Todd"

August Rush

STARS:

Freddie Highmore, Keri Russell

DIRECTOR:

Kirsten Sheridan (*Disco Pigs*)

STORY:

To avoid going to a foster home, wee Evan Taylor (Highmore) runs away from his orphanage. Once on the street he picks up a guitar, realizes his uncanny talent, and connects with an eccentric manager of young buskers (Robin Williams). But all Evan really wants is to track down his musical parents (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, Russell). And he hopes the power of his music will be enough to find them.

Alvin and the Chipmunks

STARS:

Jason Lee, David Cross

DIRECTOR:

Tim Hill (*Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties*)

STORY:

Finding a trio of stowaway chipmunks in your muffin basket is usually a bad thing. But not for Dave Seville (Lee) who discovers the rodents in his basket can not only talk, but sing. So he signs them up with a tour promoter (Cross) and takes them on the road. **DVD Extras:** "Munkumentary," two behind-the-scenes featurettes exploring the Chipmunks history and music

APRIL 8

Lions for Lambs

STARS:

Tom Cruise, Meryl Streep

DIRECTOR:

Robert Redford (*Quiz Show*)

STORY:

A Republican senator (Cruise) lectures a journalist (Streep) about how the U.S. can win the war in the Middle East. Meanwhile, two soldiers in Afghanistan are stuck in a firefight while trying to carry out the senator's plan. **DVD Extras:** "The Making of *Lions for Lambs*," "Script to Screen," "United Artists Legacy" **continued →**

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→→→ There Will Be Blood

STARS:

Daniel Day-Lewis, Paul Dano

DIRECTOR:

Paul Thomas Anderson (*Magnolia*)

STORY:

When a ruthless oil prospector (Day-Lewis) gets a tip about a town where the oil is so plentiful it seeps up through the ground he buys up all their land and sucks it dry.

APRIL 15

Lars and the Real Girl

STARS:

Ryan Gosling, Paul Schneider

DIRECTOR:

Craig Gillespie (*Mr. Woodcock*)

STORY:

Lonely Lars (Gosling) orders a life-sized, anatomically correct rubber doll off the web and behaves like she's his girlfriend.

In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale

STARS:

Jason Statham, Claire Forlani

DIRECTOR:

Uwe Boll (*BloodRayne*)

STORY:

An epic tale about a peasant (Statham) battling the orc-like Krugs who kidnapped his wife (Forlani) and killed his son.

APRIL 22

The Savages

STARS:

Laura Linney, Philip Seymour Hoffman

DIRECTOR:

Tamara Jenkins (*Slums of Beverly Hills*)

STORY:

Estranged siblings (Hoffman, Linney) reluctantly reunite after



SPOT LIGHT

Juno

After learning she's preggers, 16-year-old Juno MacGuff (Ellen Page, seen right) heads for the abortion clinic. But when told her fetus has fingernails, Juno can't go through with it and decides to give the baby up for adoption. She chooses a couple (Jason Bateman, Jennifer Garner) and gets to know them — perhaps too well — in the months before the birth.

A special two-disc DVD has 11 deleted scenes, a gag reel, director commentary, screen tests, "Cast & Crew Jam," "Way Beyond Our Maturity Level," "Diablo Cody is Totally Boss," "Jason Reitman for Shizz" and "Honest to Blog!"

➔ **RELEASE DATE: APRIL 15**

their father develops dementia and has to go into a home.

APRIL 29

The Golden Compass

STARS:

Nicole Kidman, Dakota Blue Richards

DIRECTOR:

Chris Weitz (*About a Boy*)

STORY:

Schoolgirl Lyra (Richards) heads to the far north to save a kidnapped friend.

All release dates are subject to change.

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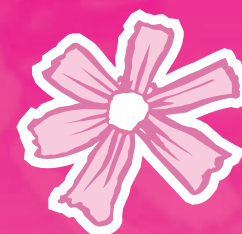
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STARGAZING

HOROSCOPE FOR APRIL 2008 ♦ BY DAN LIEBMAN



Penélope Cruz

SIGN: Taurus

BORN: April 28, 1974

WHERE: Madrid, Spain

Aries

March 21 ★ April 20

It's a building type of month. You're taking small steps toward a work-related goal, and tiny risks in a personal relationship. A confrontation may be unavoidable on or after the 22nd. You may be paying too much for a service, so shop around.

Taurus

April 21 ★ May 22

Though you're not looking for adventure, you find yourself in the centre of one after the 10th. Look for opportunities that let you fulfill a long-time dream. Leadership and communications are your strengths — it's an excellent month to lead meetings.

Gemini

May 23 ★ June 21

You keep a low profile early on. Then, around the 15th, your social life goes into overdrive. Use connections to land a dream assignment. Rely on research, not brochures, if making a big purchase or planning a trip. And ask lots of annoying questions.

Cancer

June 22 ★ July 22

Financial instincts are sharp and you can make money doing something you enjoy. Fixing a family problem takes creativity plus flexibility, so come up with plans B and C. You're obsessing on the past and should make an effort to live in the present.

Leo

July 23 ★ August 22

The people you deal with are in touch with reality — at last. You can finalize decisions involving a group. Watch out for people spreading rumours about you during the week of the 14th.

Virgo

August 23 ★ September 22

While others vie for top position this month, you make gradual strides and win an important ally. Nostalgia is a theme in late April as you connect with a childhood friend. Don't dance around issues if seeking a favour.

Libra

September 23 ★ October 22

You're a person of few words, but those words speak volumes this month. You can get your own way by letting people *think* they're making big decisions. You tend to be a little too generous and trusting with someone new.

Scorpio

October 23 ★ November 21

You come out of hibernation, and sluggish areas in career or relationships spring to life. Someone tries to trick you into revealing secrets — your own, or another person's. You're vulnerable after the 19th.

Sagittarius

November 22 ★ December 22

You make a statement by *not* making statements. In other words, stop trying to solve everybody's problems. This new approach results in at least one greatly improved relationship.

Capricorn

December 23 ★ January 20

Spruce up your surroundings and create a new look — just avoid anything retro. Eccentric is one thing, but someone you've been dealing with becomes difficult to handle. You'll make a big announcement this month.

Aquarius

January 21 ★ February 19

You finish old business early in the month, and then move on to education-related goals. Shared finances become complicated after the 11th. Be sure to follow up on health-related and other unanswered messages.

Pisces

February 20 ★ March 20

Taking a course on a new area of interest has an added social benefit. You also learn something about yourself when a friend or acquaintance makes a casual observation. A late-month extravagant streak can get out of control. Hide credit cards after the 20th.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1st: Debbie Reynolds
2nd: Linda Hunt
3rd: Eddie Murphy
4th: Christine Lahti
5th: Michael Moriarty
6th: Billy Dee Williams
7th: Russell Crowe
8th: Patricia Arquette
9th: Dennis Quaid
10th: Mandy Moore
11th: Joel Grey
12th: Claire Danes
13th: Rick Schroder
14th: Brad Garrett
15th: Emma Thompson
16th: Ellen Barkin
17th: Jennifer Garner
18th: James Woods
19th: Hayden Christensen
20th: Jessica Lange
21st: Andie MacDowell
22nd: Jack Nicholson
23rd: Michael Moore
24th: Barbra Streisand
25th: Renée Zellweger
26th: Carol Burnett
27th: James LeGros
28th: Penélope Cruz
29th: Daniel Day-Lewis
30th: Kirsten Dunst

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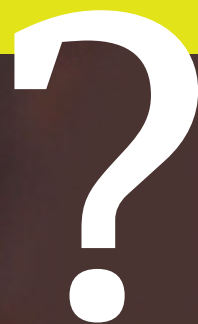
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FAMOUS LAST WORDS

OUR READERS HAVE THEIR SAY

We asked you...

An old flame, someone new or no one at all? If you were writing the script for *Sex and the City: The Movie* who would Carrie end up with?



“Berger. The Post-it note did not provide closure for Carrie, nor the viewers. I think he will redeem himself in the movie but will need to get past Big first.”

—Kim Larsen, Burlington, ON

You told us...

“Dashing in from the rain she finds herself sitting alone in a corner coffee shop when she is offered a towel and a friendly smile from a stranger who introduces himself as Kramer. Strange, but somehow it works.”

—Robert Culling, Toronto, ON

“My first response was to say Big! But after careful reflection, I have reconsidered. Big had his chance and his day is done. I would pair Carrie with a new man, Big's younger brother, played perhaps by Clive Owen? Mmmm.”

—Christine Monteiro, Bowmanville, ON

“Carrie *must* end up with Big. The ‘eternal bachelorette’ won't appeal to female fans and someone new is too risky — he'd have to be perfect to be considered good enough for Carrie. So it has to be Big.”

—Tamar Grains, Toronto, ON

“Matthew Broderick and an acting coach.”

—Mimi Jones, Victoria, BC

NEXT QUESTION: Which star is most in need of a makeover, and what would you change?



ANSWER ONLINE at Cineplex.com/famouslastwords

All responses must be entered by April 30th. Look for the answers to this question in the June issue. Responses may be edited for length and clarity.

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